

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) An isolated subcellular protein having a molecular weight of about 52kDa, said protein having been expressed from a *Francisella tularensis* subculture growing in synthetic salts medium at pH 6.5.

Claims 2-5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) The subcellular protein of claim 1, wherein said protein is identified by immunological reaction with an antiserum or antibodies from said antiserum, said antiserum having been obtained from an animal which has been first vaccinated with O-polysaccharide extracted from a *B. abortus*, which is immunologically cross-reactive with *Francisella tularensis*, and then survived challenge with a dose of the *Francisella tularensis* which would be lethal in the absence of said first vaccination

~~The subcellular protein of claim 1, wherein said infectious agent is a bacterium, virus, fungus, yeast or parasite, said first infectious agent being *B. abortus* and said second infectious agent being *Francisella tularensis*.~~

7. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A method for expressing a subcellular protein of claim 1 from a *Francisella tularensis* infected mammal, said protein having a molecular weight of about 52kDa, said method comprising subculturing a sample from said infected mammal in synthetic salts medium at a pH of 6.5 and in sub-optimal environment to enhance the expression of said protein.

8. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 7, wherein said sub-optimal environment occurs during the first three rounds of subculturing.

9. (Withdrawn) A method of vaccinating a mammal against *Francisella tularensis* comprising administering a protein of claim 1 to said mammal.

Claims 10-17. (Canceled)

18. (Withdrawn) A method of assessing the immune status and level of protection for a mammal vaccinated with the protein of claim 1 comprising detecting the presence of antibodies to said protein in said mammal.

Claim 19. (Canceled)

20. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A method for assessing in vitro the usefulness of a vaccine lot for quality assurance, comprising identifying and quantifying the subcellular protein of claim 1 in said lot~~key subcellular protein in said vaccine lot.~~

21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20, wherein said vaccine lot is a *Francisella tularensis* vaccine lot.

Claim 22. (Canceled)

23. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A method for identifying the presence of a *Francisella tularensis* infection in a mammal, comprising detecting the presence of the subcellular protein of claim 1~~having a molecular weight of about 52 kDa~~ in the mammal's serum.

Sikora et al.
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Second Amendment After Final Rejection

Claim 24. (Canceled)